

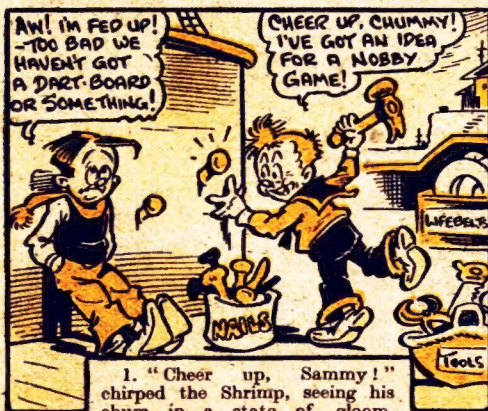
COMIC CUTS

AND LARKS

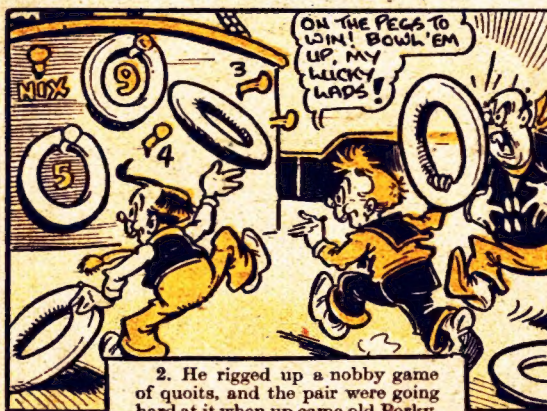
[No. 2,755.]

SAMMY AND THE SHRIMP GET THE MATES IN A STEW!

[DECEMBER 2, 1944.]



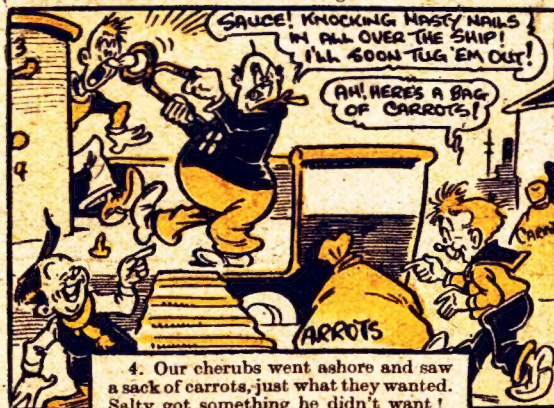
1. "Cheer up, Sammy!" chirped the Shrimp, seeing his chum in a state of gloom.



2. He rigged up a nobby game of quoits, and the pair were going hard at it when up came old Porky.



3. He soon stopped their game, and ordered them to put some carrots in to soak.



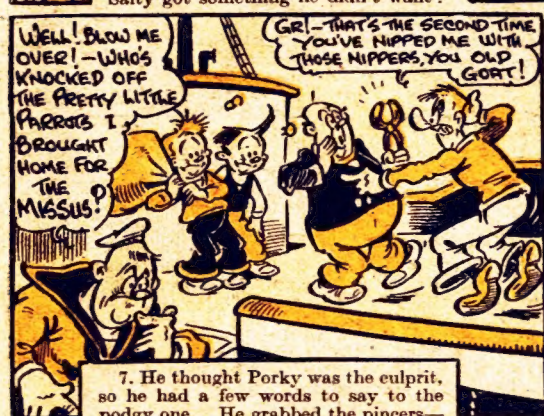
4. Our cherubs went ashore and saw a sack of carrots, just what they wanted. Salty got something he didn't want!



5. Porky tweaked his nose with the pinchers. So the mates had a rough and tumble. Salty gave Porky a warning.



6. Two ticks and a bit later, Salty had his ear nipped.



7. He thought Porky was the culprit, so he had a few words to say to the podgy one. He grabbed the pinchers—



8. It was Porky's turn to have his sniffer nipped. Laughing heartily, the Shrimp emptied the sack into the bath.



9. Then Salty told Porky to cut off the tops of the carrots to make a nice stew.



10. But they weren't carrots at all. No, they were parrots, belonging to the sailor who had brought them home. And—



11. That jolly Jack Tar let himself go, while Sammy freed the two parrots from the bath.



12. Having dealt with the mates, Jack generously invited our pair to step ashore, and they went.

ROVER JOE

Bank Hold-up!

THE straggling main street of Blue Springs was thronged with people when Rover Joe rode leisurely into the little Western cow-town, staring about him with puzzled interest.

"Sleepy, old son," Joe drawled, addressing his remark to the bottle-nosed, scarred grey. "Looks like something's gonna happen. Unless the town's turned out to welcome 'ya' an' me, old times," he added, with a chuckle.

But the cheery-faced little range runner soon learned the reason for the excitement in Blue Springs. The crowds had gathered to watch the shooting of a thrilling bank hold-up scene, which was to be part of a new Wild West film drama.

As Joe rode slowly nearer to the bank, he saw that the street had been cleared except for a large car on which an impressive-looking film camera was perched on a raised platform. Two men, wearing fur-collared greatcoats, stood beside the camera, peering intently down the main street.

Suddenly, as the distant clatter of rearing hoofbeats sounded, a cry went up.

"Here they come!" And the crowd craned forward eagerly.

Joe reined in and turned to stare down the street. Two masked horsemen galloped into view, and while the film camera recorded their every action they pulled up amid a flurry of dust in front of the little Blue Springs bank.

One of the men leapt to the roadway and, whipping out his guns, went clattering into the bank. In a matter of moments it seemed he reappeared carrying a metal-bound case. Slinging this up to his hand he leapt into the saddle, and the two horses were quickly spurred into top speed as they raced off down the main street.

A moment later the film car went roaring after the actor-bandits, the camera still turning as it filmed their getaway.

At last, as the hoofbeats died to a mere echo, the crowds began to disperse, laughing and chattering, for they felt that fans had really come to their sleepy little township, even though what they had just witnessed was only make-believe.

"Well," Joe grinned, the trace of a smile on his wizened face. "Guess those guys couldn't 'a' done it better if they'd been real bandits. They shure looked the part!"

Next moment the little wanderer broke off and his smile faded. For out of the bank had staggered the elderly manager, holding his hands to

an ugly wound in his head. And there was no playacting about this new incident.

"Bandits!" the old chap was shouting. "Not film actors at all—quick! They got me with a silenced gun—they've robbed the bank—"

"Gosh!" gasped Joe. "So it was the real thing—the dirty coyotes! Sleepy, old-time, guess this 'here we do' were some hard ridin'—and I don't mean maybe!"

And while the dumfounded crowd milled around the Blue Spring bank, Sleepy was racing away towards the distant snow-clad hills in pursuit of the bandits.

On the face of things pursuit seemed hopeless, for it was more than likely that the two film-men in the car were partners in the crime. If that were so, Joe reasoned, the bandits would abandon their horses and would continue their getaway in the car.

But as Sleepy pressed on deeper into the hills the stocky, gruff-faced little range tramp became more and more mystified. The trail was easy to follow, for there had been a fairly heavy fall of snow the previous night, and the tracks of the two horses and of the pursuing car were clear and distinct.

Suddenly, Joe saw something lying in the snow beside the trail. He reined in and leapt from the saddle, to discover that the object was a round black metal box. Joe instantly recognized it as a film container.

"Reckon it dropped from that film car," he muttered. "I'll take care of it. It might come in handy as evidence."

Stuffing the black box inside his saddle pouch, he remounted, and his pursuit continued. But not for long.

He was just about to renege in the winding hill trail, on which the snow was becoming deeper, when clear on the crisp air sounded a muffled cry—a cry for help.

It seemed to come from a snow-capped copse of trees, and Joe jumped from the saddle. Alert for any sign of treachery, he hurried towards the spot, one hand on the butt of his holstered six-shooter.

His eyes widened at the sight before him.

Two white-faced, half-frozen men, stripped to shirt and trousers, were roped back to back to a fir tree that overhung a deep ravine. And very evident signs of relief showed on their drawn faces as the stocky little Westerner strode towards them.

Cargo of Crooks!

"SAY, what's the idea?" Joe drawled as he approached the shivering men. Then, as he glanced down at the prints in the snow beside the tree, a light of understanding crossed his weather-toughened countenance.

"Gee," he grunted, "reckon 'ya' guys have kinda figured in two hold-ups this mornin'!"

"Shure we have," answered the elder of the two men. And he began to loosen their bonds and help them to regain the use of their frozen limbs, he heard their story.

They were Hiram K. Hallis, the film producer, and his cameraman, who had been in the car shooting the hold-up scene. Everything went off as arranged, and it was not until they were speeding along on the snow-covered trail that they realized that something had gone wrong with their plans.

And as he listened Joe came to the decision that these two men were not partners of the hold-up bandits.

"I began to suspect things were not all they should have been when the two men whose escape we were filming did not slow down after leaving Blue Springs," said the man. "Then, when



"Bandits!" the old chap shouted. "They've robbed the bank!"

We reached this spot, the men turned on us and we were forced to hand over our jackets and greatcoats. Before they rode off in our car they said that that was—and I guess we'd have been frozen stiff if you hadn't happened along. We're mighty grateful to you, and—"

"Say, this is no time for handing out thanks," the little wanderer broke in sharply. "But what happened to your real film stars?"

"From what those rats told us," replied the answer, they held up no company at our location beyond Blue Springs, and themselves took the places of the two actors who were to stage the fake bank hold-up. "But what do you intend to do now?"

"Go after 'em, o' course!" Joe grunted, as he swung himself into the saddle again. "But he said 'Gee, 'ya' two guys'd better start trailin' back to Blue Springs. S'long! I'll be seein' you later."

And with a flurry of snow flying from his hoofs, Sleepy went galloping off

along the trail that led still deeper into the hills.

As Sleepy raced on, Joe's keen eyes were fixed on the double track of the car wheels showing clearly in the snow. Soon the trail began to rise steadily and the snow deepened. This helped to reduce the old grey's speed, but scrutiny of the car's bare wheels told Joe that the car had been slowed down almost to a walking pace.

Suddenly, at a sharp bend in the trail ahead, he saw the car. Its front wheels were firmly embedded in a deep snow-drift and its two occupants were feverishly trying to extricate it.

Joe trotted Sleepy towards the spot and then reined in. The bandits, he saw, were trying to force the car out of the snow wearing heavy fur-collared greatcoats over their Western garb.

"Howdy, strangers!" he called. "Guess 'ya' struck up 'ot' trouble."

"You're telling us," one of the bandits grunted. "Say, listen, hombre. I'm Hiram K. Hallis, the film producer, you've heard tell of me, I guess—and this is my cameraman." He indicated the other man, who was leaning over the car, straining and pushing at the front of the car. "We're in a mighty hurry to get to Burgonville, but we're all stuck 'ere. Guess any ideas, pardner, to get us outa this goldarned snowdrift?"

Joe dismounted and made an inspection of the car.

"Gee, 'ya' stuck, an' no mistake," he drawled. "We'll see what my old horse can do about it."

He called Sleepy across, then he attached a rope to the old grey's saddle-horn and knotted the other end to the rear bumper of the film car. Watched by the two men, whose baleful eyes never left the stocky figure for a moment, the little wanderer urged Sleepy to pull.

The old grey responded gallantly, but his hoofs slipped in the soft layer of snow, and did little, nothing helpful. Then, as Sleepy strained backwards, the car began slowly to move, and at last it started to stand free of the snow, leaving it trailing for a moment on the churned up trail.

"That's a mighty fine 'o' you, old-timer," sang out one of the bandits as he and his partner climbed back into the stolen car.

"So, 'ya'! Here's 'ya'!"

Next moment he whipped out a gun. But before he could take aim, Joe's own hand was thrust into his hand.

There came a deafening bang as the six-shooter spoke, and the treacherous bandit gave a convulsive jerk, his head snapping and clutched at his smashed wrist.

Instantly the second bandit flung the car into gear, and a moment later it would have gone roaring away up the trail. But Joe was ready for any such move.

Bending forward, he leapt into the back of the car.

"Hold 'ya' horses, rat!" he blazed at the driver, who cowered back under the threat of the gun. "You're the first in the little man's steely eyes. 'Gee!' I'm givin' the orders from now on. Hand over 'ya' shoes!"

Joe snatched the guns from the two scared bandits and flung them into the back of the car. Then he perched himself on the camera platform and his old contented smile wrinkled his weather-beaten face.

"Okay! Now we're headin' back for Blue Springs," he drawled. "An' don't try any tricks or this gun 'o' mine might go off again."

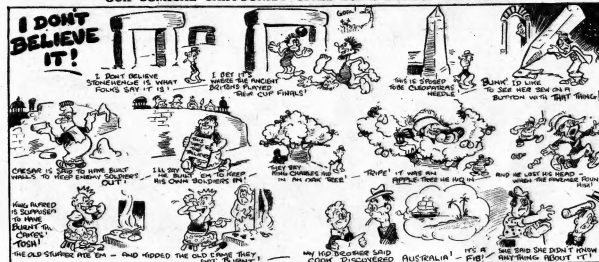
But the two bandits knew when they had met their master, and with a tenuous roar the car moved off, Sleepy loping along behind.

It was not long before they overtook the real Hiram K. Hallis and his cameraman, travelling along the snow-covered trail. And Joe could not restrain his mirth when he saw the open-mouthed amazement on their faces at sight of their car with its cargo of crooks.

"Gee, 'ya' two guys shure do look odd," Joe chuckled, as he climbed into the film men's car. "You'd better relieve those rats 'o' 'ya' greatcoats, the 'ya' gotta get 'em an' appoint 'em with the sheriff 'o' Blue Springs."

(Another viewing Rover Joe adventure in Friday week's number.)

OUR COMICAL CARTOONIST GIVES SOME SECRET HISTORY!



London Daily News

ROOM 27!

An Unexpected Case.

NIGHT was falling. Kenton Steel drove his car into the town of Bonchester. He was on his way back to London, after concluding a case that had occupied him for a couple of days.

"This is as far as I intend driving," he asserted to the detective, "a long run to London, and I don't fancy driving in the dark, especially in this weather. I'll find an hotel to put up for the night and finish the journey in the morning."

There were very few hotels in the place. But before long Steel found one, the Monrocy, where he was able to book a room for the night. The hotel had its own garage, and as soon as he had put his car away, Steel made for the dining-room and had a meal.

After that there was nothing much to do, beyond gazing through one or two papers and enjoying a smoke: It was not long after ten when the detective decided he might as well amuse himself as it was his intention to start off directly after breakfast in the morning.

He slept like a top in a very comfortable bed. Waking next morning, he washed, shaved and dressed and descended to the dining-room for breakfast.

The food, like the accommodation, was quite good. There did not seem to be any other visitors staying at the hotel, which was a small one.

"Now to get on the road," said Steel at length. "The weather isn't so bad this morning. It's dry, that's one good thing. So I ought not to be very long getting back."

But it was not to be. For as Steel was settling his bill at the cashier's desk in the vestibule, a portly man of about fifty came hurrying up, his eyes goggling with excitement.

"Where's the manager?" he spluttered at the clerk. "Where is he? I must see him at once."

The manager, Mr. Turner, happened to be passing at the time, and he came quickly across.

"Is anything the matter, Mr. Mayhew?" he asked of the excited guest.

"Yes, there is," was the reply. "I've been robbed! My room has been entered during the night, and my wallet and gold watch and chain have vanished."

The manager became alert at once. So did Steel.

"Really, Mr. Mayhew," said Turner, a smart, keen-faced little man, "I am very distressed to hear this. Are you sure?"

"Yes, positive!" broke in the excited Mr. Mayhew. "There is no doubt about it. The things have gone. Some thief has been at work."

And then, before Turner could make ready to telephone the matter to the cashier's counter. The call proved to be for the manager, and he took the receiver.

The spluttering of a female's voice could be heard from the other end. Though Steel could not catch what the woman said, Turner's face grew longer and seemed that there was more trouble.

"I'll come up at once, Mrs. Goodman," said the man at length.

He replaced the receiver and spoke to the cashier.

"I am going up to Mrs. Goodman's suite in the first floor," he said. "I shall be back in a few minutes. Please excuse me, Mr. Mayhew," he went on, turning to Steel.

"But I—have been robbed!" spluttered Mayhew. "It must be seen to at once. The police must be informed."

The more time lost, the more opportunity the thief has of getting away.

However, he was not to be deterred. For Turner was hurrying away and soon disappeared from view. Mayhew turned to Steel and continued to pour out the facts into the detective's ears.

"I think you'd better try to keep

calm till the manager returns," Steel said to him in a friendly tone. "I tell you no doubt do all he can, not only for your sake, but for the reputation of the hotel."

He was very relieved when, after some minutes, the manager was seen returning, looking more worried than ever.

"Get through to the police station for me, please," Harris," he said to the cashier. "Mrs. Goodman has been robbed, too. This—this is dreadful! The police will have to be called in, and—"

"Excuse me," Steel butted in quietly. "But I wonder if I can be of any assistance as I am on the spot. I am Kenton Steel."

The manager gasped. He had had no idea hitherto of the identity of the detective, who had only signed the hotel book with his initials.

As soon as he could get over his surprise, Turner accepted at the detective's offer. So Steel suggested their retiring to the office, and Mayhew went with them.

Then Steel learnt details of Mrs. Goodman's loss. Her rooms had been entered during the night, and articles of jewellery had been stolen. She was trusting on the police being informed at once.

"That's a thing I should like to avoid if I can," said the manager to Steel. "If only you could succeed in dealing

with the matter and keeping it quiet it would be a lot to the hotel."

"Well, let's strike while the iron is hot," Steel said. "I'll have a look straightaway at Mr. Mayhew's room, and Mrs. Goodman's, too, if it is convenient."

"By all means," said Mayhew readily. "And if you can get my wallet and gold watch back for me I shall be eternally grateful to you, Mr. Steel."

The three went up to the first floor where Mayhew's room was situated. Steel spent some time in examining Mrs. Mayhew's room, and then he found nothing in the shape of a clue.

"All right," he said at last. "You can stay here for the time being, Mr. Mayhew, while I go and interview Mrs. Goodman."

He found that lady so distressed that it took him some minutes to calm her down sufficiently to talk rationally. Then she confirmed what he had already been told by the manager. Her jewellery had been stolen during the night by some mysterious marauder.

And the question was, of course, who had done it and where was he now? Steel's search of Mrs. Goodman's room did not yield any more clues than Mr. Mayhew's.

But the very fact that he had drawn a blank so far spurred Steel on to see through the case, and he was so unexpectably come his way.

"All right, Mrs. Goodman," he said.

"Don't worry too much. I think there's a good chance of your getting your property back."

With those reassuring words, he came out with the manager, and the pair went down to the office again, at Steel's suggestion.

"The odds are all in favour of somebody in the hotel being the thief," declared Steel. "Either a member of the staff or one of the visitors. What are they like?"

The manager quickly told him that the staff were all old servants and he could vouch for the honesty of every one. Then he described the remaining visitors, nearly all of whom were elderly people.

Steel could not possibly suspect any of them, Mr. Steel," he said. "And that only leaves Mr. Markham. He's been staying here for a fortnight. Says he likes the place, likes the quiet, and intends to stop here indefinitely. He has a two-roomed suite on the first floor and Glasgow, I believe."

He was interrupted by a tap on the door, which was thrown open by a man of about thirty-five.

The Locked Bag.

THE newcomer, well dressed and with neatly parted, greased hair, shot a rapid glance at the other two men.

"I must apologise for interrupting, Turner," he said.

"Not at all," replied the hotel manager. "What can I do for you, Mr. Markham?"

"Well, I'm afraid I must ask you to make out my bill," said the newcomer.

"I know that is due to you the same as it is to me. I had fully intended to stay on here for some weeks at least. But I shall be leaving this morning, which makes it imperative for me to go

to Glasgow at once. I shall be catching the midday train. So, if you will make arrangements for me to settle up I shall be obliged."

With a smile and a nod he withdrew and closed the door. Steel noticed the rather glum look on Turner's face.

"Well, that's another blow," said Steel. "The manager. 'Everything seems to be going wrong this morning. I shall be very sorry to lose Mr. Markham; he's an exceedingly nice chap. A good mixer, too. He makes friends with the other guests almost from the moment they arrive at the same hotel as he. And what is more important is the matter of these robberies.'"

"Quite so," agreed Steel, his eyes half closing. "I think I'll pop up and see the two unfortunate victims again. No need for you to come, you have enough on your hands as it is, and I can find my way."

So Steel left the manager's office and went up to the first floor, to tap on the door of Mr. Mayhew's apartment. That gentleman had him enter, and Steel, having received permission, made another examination of the room.

He went all round it, close to the walls. And all the time his keen eyes were alert for some mark on the ground, about five feet in. But it was to the door that he gave the closest scrutiny, and the most time, examining both inside and outside.

"Thank you, Mr. Mayhew," was all

he said at the finish, and then went along to Mrs. Goodman's apartment.

There he repeated the same exactly, again devoting most attention to the door. His face was thoughtful and grim, as he examined the lock.

Steel was walking slowly along the thickly carpeted corridor, when one of the staff stopped him and came along.

"What is the number of Mr. Markham's room?" Steel asked.

"No. 27, sir," he was told.

It was at the far end of the corridor, and the door was closed. Listening outside, Steel could hear sounds of a struggle, and then his leaves rapped on the door with his knuckles.

There was an appreciable pause. Then the door was turned in the lock, the door was pulled open, and Markham peered out.

"Yes, what is it?" he asked.

"You're being wanted in the manager's office," said Steel glly. "There's a long-distance call through for you, from Glasgow, I believe."

"A call from Glasgow for me?" half muttered Markham. "But I don't know anybody in Glasgow."

He checked himself and gave a little grunt.

"Oh, all right, I'll go down and see who it is. Thank for letting me know."

He came out, closed the door and hurried along to the top of the stairs. Steel followed him more slowly.

And as soon as Markham had disappeared down the stairs the detective darted back to his room.

In expert fashion Steel went over the sitting-room. He found nothing, however, when he moved to the connecting door and passed into the bed-room.

There the first thing that caught his eye was a small black bag. He pounced on it, and after a moment's search he found it was inside, something that jangled. But the bag was locked.

With a gasp, he remembered a small ring of keys on the table in the sitting-room. He darted back there, selected one, unlocked the bag, and fitted it in the lock of the bag. A click, and it came open.

And at that very moment, as silently as a cat, Markham glided into the room.

"So that's your game, is it, you spy?" he snarled fiercely. "Leave that bag alone."

But Steel was not to be thwarted now. Boldly he threw the bag open wide and looked out at what he saw. A bunch of skeleton keys, two small jemmies, a torch and two pairs of rubber gloves. The outfit of a crackman and nothing else.

A bellying snort burst from Markham, and he flung himself furiously upon Steel. But miraculously the kneeling detective was no longer there, by a split second. Markham shot forward, tripped over the bag and struck the floor.

But he put up a terrific fight, and Steel had his work cut out to hold him. He was strong and determined, but he saw. A bunch of skeleton keys, two small jemmies, a torch and two pairs of rubber gloves. The outfit of a crackman and nothing else.

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And while the police were phoned to come and take away the man, Steel explained what had happened.

"Markham is an expert crackman," he said. "He got into my room, stole my case, came to this hotel as a bona fide visitor, made himself affable to the other residents, and got to know what he wanted and how to get it."

Having made his haul last night, he concocted that story that he had to go to Glasgow, and the next morning, leaving the hotel. But he blurted out to me a few minutes ago that he didn't know where to go."

"Anyway, while he was down below to answer the imaginary phone call, I made a hurried search, and found the case. And I was already suspicious of Markham, thanks to that stuff he greases his hair with and covers his neck with. Grease and the scent, still clinging to the doors of Mrs. Goodman's room and the door of Mr. Mayhew's."

Markham, in the dark last night, first listened outside, then stood quiet still inside the closed door, while making his haul. As the residents were asleep and the coast clear."

(Don't miss Friday week's splendid Kenton Steel story.)

2-12-44



The navy looked like losing his lunch when Waddles got held up and robbed. But our waiter tripped the bad lad up and everything turned out smashing!

PLUM AND DUFF, THE BOYS OF THE BOLD BRIGADE!



1. Our bold boys were wading into some choice chewing gum when Suet stood up and wanted to know where they'd got it. Well, they told him.

2. So Suet sided up to the Yank soldier, and, prodding him politely in the small of the back, asked if he'd any gum he sort of didn't want!

3. "I sure have, buddy!" roddled the Yank in reply. "You can have all that with me." Saying which, he slung a bottle of gum at Suet—zok!

4. But it was the stuff that sticks, not the kind you chew, and Suet felt about as rotten as he looked as a result. Then Bogey boodled along!

5. He was very cross 'cos Suet didn't throw him up a smart salute as was his duty. However, Suet promptly did his best—and Bogey knew it!

6. Yes, the post to which Suet was sticking came up and smote Bogey across the teeth. Then the wind blew all his secret papers away, and—

7. To make matters worse, a passing spy tried to collect the lot. "Do something!" shrieked Bogey. So Plum did it. He gave the gum a lick—

8. And as it crumbled downhill, it gathered up Suet and took him along. And all those secret papers stuck to the gum that Suet was wearing!

9. So they were saved, whilst the spy caught a kick on the sniffer from Suet's boot. After which Bogey gave our bold boys a week's leave!



1. Our commandant gave me a dose of cookhouse duty 'o'her day, and ordered me to heat up the soup. But while I was tasting it Lena looked in.

2. Seeing that I had clicked for a tasty job, Lena quickly borrowed a water-squirt. "I'll help you out with some of that savoury soup, Martha!" she cried.

3. But just as she was filling the squirt, the commandant returned and she had to hop it. Can have this bread to go with it, Lena!





PLUM AND DUFF, THE BOYS OF THE BOLD BRIGADE!

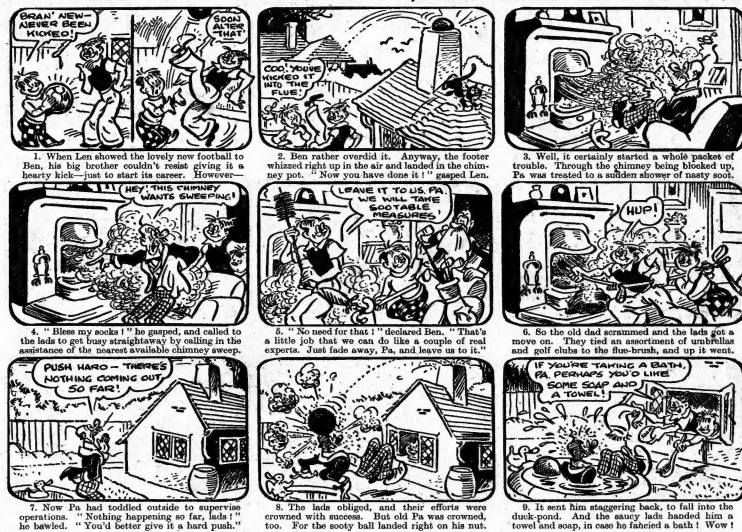


COMIC CUTS

KING OF COMICS.



BIG BEN AND LITTLE LEN, THE LARKY LADS!



And PINKY

ON SCARED OF OUR NEW
SQUAD?

WHY I
ED THE PRINTS
YESTERDAY!

WHY I
ED THE PRINTS
YESTERDAY!

WHY I
ED THE PRINTS
YESTERDAY!

OH! YOU
WOULDN'T
GEESE!

IF THE
MARTIN!

air, our com-
Hi! You
going to get away with this. No!" quacked Marcus.



Kitty thought she had put a damper on Freda when she kicked over the bowl of water. However, when Freda tried her barrow-tone voice a hawkler shut her up.

BIG BEN AND LITTLE LEN, THE LARKY LADS!



1. When Len showed the lovely new football to Ben, his big brother couldn't resist giving it a heavy kick—just to test its career. However—



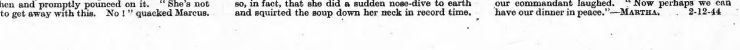
2. Ben rather overdid it. Anyway, the footer whizzed right up in the air and landed in the chimney pot. "Now you have done it!" gasped Len.



3. Well, it certainly started a whole pack of trouble. Through the chimney being blocked up, Pa was treated to a sudden shower of nasty soot.



4. Now Pa had toddled outside to supervise operations. "Nothing happening so far, lads!" he bawled. "You'd better give it a hard push."



5. Of course, he quite upset old Lena. So much so, in fact, that she did a sudden nose-dive to earth and squirted the soup down her neck in record time.



6. "Ha, ha! What a come-down for old Lena!" our commandant laughed. "Now perhaps we can have our dinner in peace."—MARTHA. 2-12-44

Another thrilling adventure of the Jumbo tank chums.

GENERAL OF THE MINE

Left in Command.
"WELCOME to Stahlmünster, mein dear, good friends! How glad we German peoples are to have the Nazis and Gestapo men have gone!"

The speaker was Herr Rudolf Ublach, manager of the coal-mine around which the battered remains of the little Ruhr town were clustered. But Sergeant Tom Arnold ignored the fat, flabby hand extended to him, for what he had seen of the methods, he was in no mood for hobnobbing with any German.

"That's what all you series say," he returned curly. "You civilians are our best pals really—now we've kicked your 'unbearable troops out of it."

"Himmel! I am mooch truh," sighed Ublach. "Always I was of der true demokration, and good friends of der brave Englanders. But it was not wise to let der pig-dogs of Nazi troopen such things."

Corporal "Tich" Worley, from Lancashire, was standing alongside Private "Rusty" Dutton, the West Indian.

"Eee, ti' troops would ha' fried you in your own fat," he remarked, grinning. "But I wouldn't trust any bloomin' Jerry farther than I could throw a Churchill tank w' one hand."

"Dat goes for me, too, old boys," nodded Rusty. "Howsomever, we're not-butchers like do Huns, and y'wot's come to no harm so long as you don't make mischief. And dat does for all de folks in dis dirty old one-hoss town."

The three pals found themselves with a job not entirely to their liking. The tank which Tom commanded had been knocked out near Stahlmünster, and Major Randall, the senior officer of the squadron, had ordered him and his crew to remain in the occupation of the remaining town whilst the armoury swept farther into Germany. His further orders were for Tom to marshal any already British troops that might appear in following the armoured attack.

Already they had hoisted the Union Jack over the mine manager's office; but no workers were to be seen, and those who remained were at their homes. All Nazi flags and swastika emblems disappeared, and a white sheet or tablecloth fluttered from every occupied house in token of an open surrender.

Tom and his crew stood in an open space bordered on one side by the coal-mine, on another by the pit shaft, and further back by the huge slag heaps in pyramid form.

"Ach, we will der good friends be come," said Ublach.

The mine manager took a snuff-box from his pocket, helped himself to a pinch and offered it to the "occupation army" of three.

"You shan't owe dat," said Tich, "but I never use it. It makes me sneeze."

Tom and Rusty declined, and the sergeant remarked:

BUST IT!



"That's your good grandfather!"

"What? No legs?"



Ublach was stooping over a hole from which a German officer was peering.

"You are sure there are no German troops still lurking in Stahlmünster?"

"Nein—no troopen are here," answered Ublach; "dot is, unless one soldier or two remains—wot der Englanders namo der secret-dog."

"A die-hard, eh?" said Tich. "What we call a blinkin' fanatic."

"Anyway, you're the big boss in these parts," added Tich; "so you can warn your people that anyone who starts gun-play under cover of the white flag will qualify for six feet of good German soil."

Ublach pulled a wry face. But the German's expression changed to an unpleasant look when the three comrades walked away, and his pig-eyes glowered balefully at their backs.

"We'll make further inquiries," said Tich. "The major said there were slave-workers from Belgium here, one of 'em a stout-hearted chap named MacIntyre who got through some confidential information to us by secret-dog. It's queer none of 'em have shown up."

They made a short tour of their small, grubby kingdom. A few German women and children peered out of doorways and windows, yet pretended not to understand when Tom spoke to them in their own language. The main impression in the town was of white flags and black locks.

Frequently two or three Belgian women came out of a grim, barracks-like building and greeted them warmly. One, an attractive blonde, explained that they had been brought forcibly from Ostend to make and repair camouflage nets. Tom questioned her about the black Belgian workers.

"None saw our men go, m'sieu's," she said. "I have fear zat all are killed."

More likely the Boches took them off to work at some other place," suggested Tom to soothe her. "But soon many British soldiers will be in Stahlmünster, beyond, and your menfolk will be found and rescued. Now, for the time being, you girls must rest here until our troops come and arrange home can be made for sending you home."

He left the Belgian women in better spirit and resumed the patrol with Tich and Rusty along the outskirts of the town and back towards the coal-mine. Then suddenly, fifty or sixty bursts of shots rang out and they flung themselves to the cover of a broken wall as a hail of bullets rained into the framework of a deserted cottage behind them.

"Eee, a sniper!" panted Tich.

Tom peered through a crevice in the wall and saw a figure crouching among some trees. His revolver spurted fire, and there were no answering shots, so he just jumped that either he was the sniper or else the fellow had scurried away.

The pals, in different directions, conversed on the place where the treacherous attack had been made. No one was to be seen, but they found a few red marks where the bullets had struck German casualties. Then, less than a

yard from a Tommy-gun whose barrel was visible, Tom saw a discovery that brought a steely glint to his eyes. It was a wooden snuff-box.

"Ublach!" he murmured. "Looks like that fat tick and the shooting, and maybe pulled the box out of his pocket with his handkerchief without noticing. Here, you fellows, get round on either side of this place and look for that mine manager—and keep your eyes sharp!—just in case he gets covered up and picked up another loaded gun. Most likely, though, he's snaked back to his office, so I'll go there in case."

His caution was vain, for he reached one of the black slag-heaps and was coming round it when he heard a guttural voice say, "Get back, you fellows, step or two and flattened himself full length with his revolver ready."

There was Rudolf Ublach with his back toward him, stooping over a hole in the ground from which a young, scar-faced German officer was peering. He seemed the first to have been discovered as Ublach said: "Ach, the Englanders schweinwunden will be searching back there—it was bad fortune that I missed them, but the traitors are the marksmen. Now, Herr Kapitän, I will make the signal for practice to take the mine, you make the signal again will I make it till the right time comes for action."

"Good!" said the Nazi captain. "I will be my nation's friend. We will yet strike a blow for our glorious Fatherland. Heil Hitler!"

Hidden Plotter!

THE German captain vanished into the ground, and Ublach, walked away. Tom darted back and sought out Tich and Rusty and told them what had occurred.

"I missed the mine manager," he ordered. "If any Jerry comes out of that hole in the ground, make him a prisoner and wait till we can use him for some purpose."

He himself went swift-footed in Ublach's tracks and peered through a damaged shutter at the side of the office window. He saw the traitor's head, his back, his legs, and his hands, and his black, glazing downward through his thick-lensed glasses and moving aside a pile of papers. Under the papers was a black electric bell-push such as the manager might normally use for summoning his clerk; but now Ublach's finger pressed it more sinisterly.

Tom noticed that he pressed twice, then three times. At the end of the third-second pause he repeated this signal and waited expectantly. A few more seconds elapsed, and a buzzer sounded faintly—two "dats" and a "dash"—and this also was repeated. The signal that the manager had sent was taken, and a corresponding signal was sent in acknowledgment by the "Ublach" Kapitan.

Ublach smiled back, smiling in his chair, and Tom returned to Tich and Rusty to explain the further developments. The mine was connected from the manager's office to somewhere in the mine, and the sergeant told Tich to blacken his hands and face with coal-dust and crawl down the gallery to investigate.

"And I've got a wild de little 'un, Mass Tom, to try to find out if I've de puffet colour 'fo' dis here scoutin' job in de coal-mine."

Tom set off on his way to his task. They left their boots behind and crawled down the gallery into darkness because they dared not use a torch. Only fifty or sixty yards from the tunnel led along at the level, and they began to hear a murmur of voices talking in German. The passage grew dark, and the light came from a single shaft of light that ran off at right angles, and saw no one and moved towards a dim light that glowed farther on.

The voice came nearer, but the sound of footsteps made the pair draw back before a score of armed Nazis, grimy with coal-dust, and dressed in the same old uniforms, came to the alcove where the light glimmered.

Each German soldier passed out of the alcove again carrying a heavy sack and Tich and Rusty, in their stockinged feet, shadowed them like spectres and saw the light shining down from the pit into a gallery beyond. The

Nazi captain was there with a torch, peering in cautiously, the two scouts saw the contents of the sacks being laid along the grimy floor in a row, and one German connecting a copper wire.

Tich gripped the arm of Rusty, whose eyes were big and round with mingled fear and anger. The light crept back noiselessly, but paused on hearing movements from some gallery deeper in the mine. The two scouts, their backs turning, so dared not investigate further, but returned to the surface, where they recovered their boots and hastened to the camp, leaving the mine office.

"Hallo, you keepers!" greeted Tom cheerfully, as he came back to the camp. Whole companies of our chaps are coming toward the town."

"Fine!" panted Tich. "But don't collect 'em into the open space between 'ti' slag-heaps, like Major Randall suggested in front of 't' fat Jerry who's in charge of this coal-mine."

"No? What's up?"

"Nothin'—nothin' at all, Tom," answered Tich; "it's down there below."

"And hundreds on dirty Huns," supplied Rusty. "Dat is, at least a score old boys."

A grim look came into Tom's face, and he beckoned the pair to follow him into the mine office.

So he went, and still at the work, Herr Ublach," he exclaimed, as the fat German manager looked up from his desk. "It's that snuff of yours good for a cold!"

Herr Ublach smiled. "You would der least snuff like now, hein?"

He felt in his pocket, and a puzzled look came into his close-set eyes, but he said calmly. "Ach, dot is too bad. Dynamite from the mine must have left der snuff-box behind."

"Well, go and get it," snapped Tom, "and get it quick!"

So he went, and he went out of the office and waddled across the open space on his way to the houses. Under his breath he cursed the "Englanders," and he thought that he had a shoulder there was a hypocritical smirk on his pasty face. Immediately it faded, and he went on his way. He stopped as if paralyzed. For, through the office window, he saw Sergeant Tom Arnold bending over the desk with a hammer on the black electric bell-push.

A hoarse cry left Ublach's trembling lips, and he rushed to the door and less seemed to have lost all strength. In sweating terror he saw Tom press the button with grim determination, releasing the lethal "un" in the Morse code.

There was a slight pause; then, as the door opened, a shock of air, a bagged office wall, the deep roll of thunder shook the area and the ground between the slag-heaps heaved and trembled. The air was filled with a great force; great fissures opened and closed, and the lifeless, battered body of the manager lay on the floor. A deadly catalysm that might well have destroyed a battalion of British troops.

The German civilian had paid the penalty for his treachery, and now less seemed to have lost all strength. In sweating terror he saw Tom press the button with grim determination, releasing the lethal "un" in the Morse code.

A sound of rushing water caused Tom to go below, and he found that the pipe leading from the canal was pouring in water to flood the mine. He rushed on by means of a ladder, a controlling lever, and, descending to a lower level, discovered another reason why the Huns had opened the sluice. Deep down, the sluice was broken, and gaggled, left to drown.

The rescue of those Belgians made Tom Tich and Rusty, who were satisfied with their enforced stay at Stahlmünster.

(There'll be a thrilling R.F. story on next Friday week's comic. Don't miss it.)

A Champion Chuckle-raiser!

CAUGHT BENDING!

Raising the Wind!

THERE was a very dismal expression on the face of Gussie Gregory as he stood staring out of the window of his bed-sitting-room.

It was not the weather that depressed him, for the day was bright enough for the time of the year. What was worrying Gussie so much was the fact that he was exceedingly short of money at the moment.

He had himself to thank for that fact, for he was an extravagant nature. But he did not like being hard up, he was racking his brains as to how he could raise a few pounds to tide him over.

"I could sell something, if I'd anything to sell," he muttered. "But I haven't, so that waives that out. I've tapped all my friends for loans, and there's no chance of any more coming up any more. If only some wealthy person would adopt me!"

He gave a sigh as he visualised that picture. Then, as he realised that there was no chance whatever of it happening.

"Of course, there's my Uncle Gregory," he said to himself. "He's got plenty of money. In fact, nobody knows just how much he has got. I don't believe the old buffer knows himself to a thousand or two. But he sticks to it like glue. He could send me a fiver and never miss it. But if he does, and if he'd, he'd tell me off well and truly."

Gussie sighed again and turned away from the window. He pulled out of his pocket all the money he possessed, and his soul deepened.

"Two and fourpence!" he growled. "A lot for that! It's enough to make a chap downright ill, being hard up like this. I wonder I don't have a breakdown."

And next moment Gussie's eyes opened wide as an inspiration came to him. He turned it over in his mind rapidly, and then gave a little yelp.

"I've an idea!" he muttered. "It might come off if I work it properly. I can't try anything, anyway. I'll write to my Uncle Gregory, telling him I'm very ill in bed and under the necessity of saying he'll call on me the other day, and where I'm going to get the money from to pay his bill is aggravating my complaint and making me worse with a bit of luck, I might click."

Without losing time, Gussie got out of bed, wrote a letter to his uncle. He tore up half a dozen efforts before he at last got it to his liking.

This is how it went:

"My dear Uncle—I hope this letter finds you enjoying good health, as you always do. I am sorry to say that, far from being in the pink myself, I have been feeling for the last few nights as if I were confined to bed. The doctor, who calls every other day, says it will be another two or three weeks before I shall be able to get up. Not that I mind that. But what is worrying me is the fact that I have no idea where I can get the money to pay my bill, which is sure to be a pretty stiff one."

"Still, I don't want to worry you with my troubles. I expect you have plenty of your own."

"With best wishes,
Your affectionate nephew,
"GUSSE."

"There, that ought to do it," gurgled the old buffoon, having read through the letter several times. "I don't ask him for any money, do I! I leave it to him to swell off his gear, and we'll see what happens and hope for the best."

The letter was posted, and Gussie waited hopefully for the reply. Five days passed, and his hopes began to dwindle. It seemed as though his uncle did not intend even to answer his letter.



"Keep your nut down!" he choried as he went sailing over.

But next morning, just before mid-day, the postman pushed a letter through the front door, addressed to Gussie. One glance at the handwriting showed him that it was from his Uncle Gregory.

"Yippee!" tottled Gussie, delighting, his eyes sparkling. "Now to see what the old buffer says!"

He tore open the envelope and quickly read the letter inside. It ran as follows:
"My dear Nephew,—Thank you for your letter which I have only just had, as I have been away for a few days. I am sorry to hear that you are so ill, and I would not like your doctor to have to wait for his money after attending you so frequently. I am sending you five pounds to-morrow by registered post to pay his bill. I would send it to-night, but it is too late, as the post office is shut. I am sure you will be better again, I remain,
Your uncle,
"GREGORY GUSSE."

And when he read that Gussie did a war-dance and let loose whoopee of joy that scared the cat into scuttling out of the house and brought two pictures down off the wall.

But Gussie did not worry about that. He was overjoyed at the response to his letter and the prospect of receiving the useful sum of five pounds next day.

"I'm going to splash that five quid!" he muttered. "I'll throw a little party to two or three of my pals at the Ritz Cafe to-morrow night. I may as well go along and make the arrangements now. Whoopie!"

Grabbing his hat and stick, Gussie left the house and went dancing down the street, showing plainly how excited and delighted he was. People turned to stare after him, wondering what had bitten him.

But Gussie didn't care what he looked like. He called on three of his pals, invited them to the spread the following night, and was assured that they would be delighted to be there.

Then he went on to the Ritz Cafe, interviewed the manager, and booked a table for four. He also arranged for the menu, and it certainly promised to be quite a nice spread for wartime.

"Well, that's all settled," gurgled Gussie, as he wended his way back home again. "Everything's arranged, and I shall be ready to-morrow and there. That'll roll up to-morrow and there won't be much left by the time I've finished with it. Good old Uncle Gregory! If he only knew! Ha, ha, ha!"

He was still feeling very bucked, and as he strolled along, he heard old gentlemen bending down to tie up his shoelace, Gussie could not resist the temptation to fly over his back.

"Keep your nut down!" he went sailing over.

The astounded old gent nearly fell. By the time he stood upright, Gussie was tottling off, grinning like a Cheshire cat.

"All right, keep your wool on. Whiskers!" chirped Gussie. "You'd have done the same if you felt in the pink like I do."

With a wave of his stick, he tottled off, leaving the old chap glaring after him, his chin-finger wagging up and down as he tried to find words suitable to the occasion.

Gussie went along home, and went into the sitting-room. He was standing by the window, looking out into the street, when the smile suddenly faded from his face and his eyes opened wide.

"Mum-my hat!" he gulped. "Look who's coming along the street! It's Uncle Gregory! What on earth's brought him here? And I'm supposed to be very ill in bed according to that letter I wrote him! Wow! I must get a move on!"

He darted into the kitchen where he hurriedly put his landlady wise as to the situation.

"I'm supposed to be ill in bed," he gulped breathlessly. "I'm going to get into bed now. When my uncle arrives, show up his, and if he asks how I am, tell him I'm a little better but I've had a bad fortnight."

Gussie flew up the stairs to his own room, tore off his clothes, donned his pyjamas, and scrambled into bed.

A few seconds after Gussie had got between the sheets, there was a tap at his door, and his landlady ushered his shaven uncle into the room. He was a clean-shaven man, and he was carrying a small bag.

He stared hard at the supposed invalid, and Gussie put on a smile of greeting.

"Hallo, uncle!" he said, in rather a weak voice. "I—I didn't expect to see you to-day. This is a surprise!"

"Yes, I expect it is," replied Uncle Gregory, putting down his bag on the small table beside the bed. "I'm sorry you've been in bed for a fortnight."

"And I'll be another fortnight at least before the doctor lets me get up," said Gussie. "I've really had a pretty bad time of it. But it's done me good to have the pleasure of seeing you, uncle. Why—why did you come all this long journey?"

"Well, for one thing," said Uncle Gregory, who decided that instead of sending the five pounds as mentioned in my letter, I might as well bring it and have the opportunity of seeing you myself."

"That was very good of you, uncle," said Gussie. "And, as I say, it is a very big surprise."

"Yes, and now I've got a surprise for you," Uncle Gregory went on. "I wonder if you can tell me this?"

With that, he opened his bag, and took out a pair of spectacles and a white beard, and fitted them to his face. Then he stared hard at Gussie, who tried to scream aloud, but his tongue went on strike.

For standing before him now was the old buffer he had caught stooping and whom he had used for overboaks!

"I think you recognise me," Uncle Gregory went on. "I certainly recognised you when you vaulted over me in the street. And I knew then from the evidence of my own eyes that what you had written in your letter about being ill in bed was all moonshine and fiddlesticks."

Gussie felt that the room was swimming round him. He also felt that the five pounds he had counted on was not swimming but sunk.

And he was right. His uncle, sure of his ground, did not spare him.

All a made up, cock-and-bull story to get the many thousands of Ovaltine's out of me!" he roared. "I guessed as much! That's why I got you to disguise it. It was my intention to come to the Ritz and find out where you really were ill without betraying who I really was. But that wasn't necessary. You gave yourself away when in the street. I'm jolly glad I did come. It's cost me a railway journey, but it's saved me a great deal of money in pounds by an artful young scamp. And now I'll bid you good-day."

With that Uncle Gregory took his departure, leaving Gussie coiled up in a ship's cable. When at last he could get up and realise the truth, he dressed and sadly went out to answer his invitations to his friends and wash out all arrangements for the spread.

(Another merry yarn in our next number, on sale Friday week.)



A SLEDGE HAMMER
A FISH. A BELL
A RABBIT
A BIRD
A POWDER PUFF

ONE of the most important reasons why the many thousands of Ovaltine's, all over the country, are such fit, vigorous and happy boys and girls, is that they drink 'Ovaltine' every day.

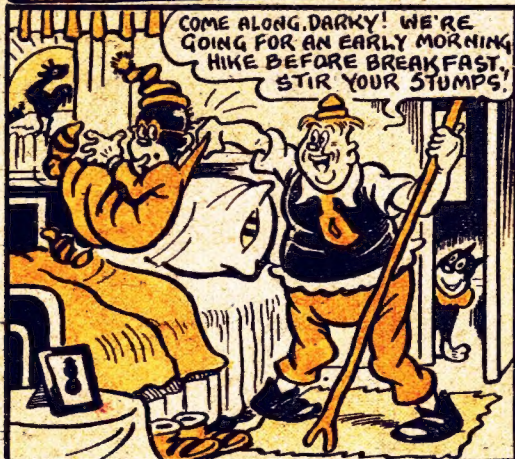
This delicious food beverage provides the nutritive elements required to build up health, strength and vitality. Moreover it contains valuable protective food properties which help to strengthen your system against coughs, colds and winter ill.

Ask mother to give you 'Ovaltine' every day. You will enjoy it also sprinkled on porridge or used in a sandwich.

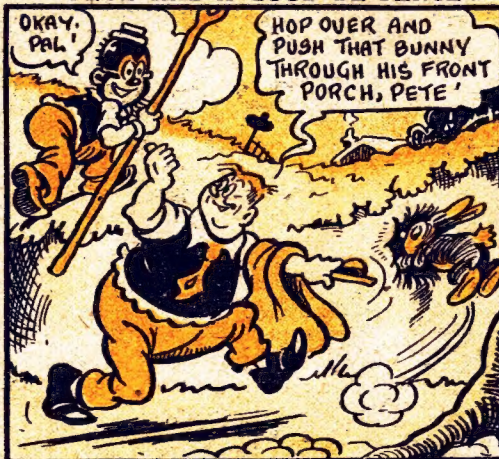
OWALTINE
for Health, Strength & Energy

PINHEAD and PETE

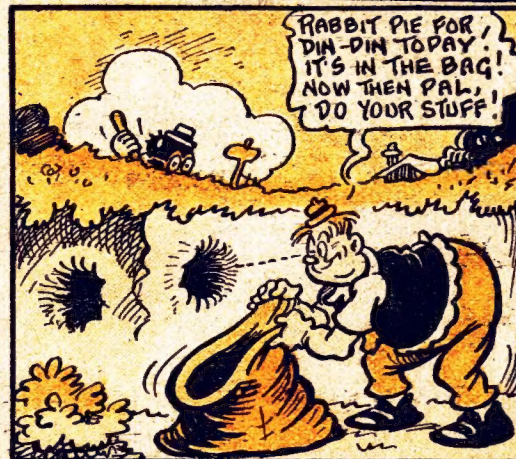
PETE HAS A GOOD DE-FENCE!



1. Pinhead got up with the lark t'other morning, and just for a lark he caught his little pal napping and yanked him out of bed. "It's the early bird that catches the worm, so we'll go for a hike!" said he.



2. Of course, Pete said he did not want to catch worms, he only wanted to be left to sleep in peace. But he had to go all the same, and on seeing some bunny rabbits he suggested bagging a few for lunch.



3. "Good idea!" cried Pinhead. "You pop round to the back door of Bunnyville, pal, and push them through the front porch with my stick!" And the big boy placed his bag ready to catch them.



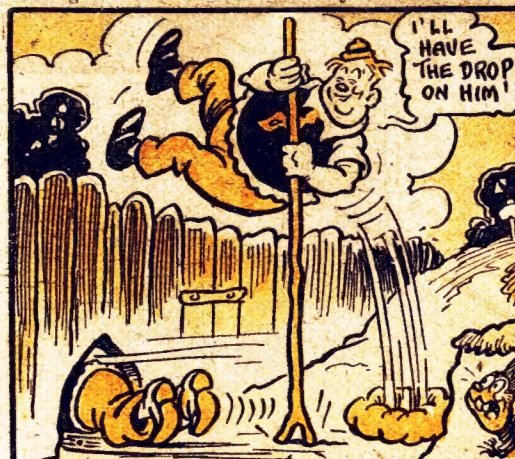
4. Dreaming of rabbit pie he was while he waited for something to turn up, when all of a sudden something did. But instead of a bunny it was his nose!



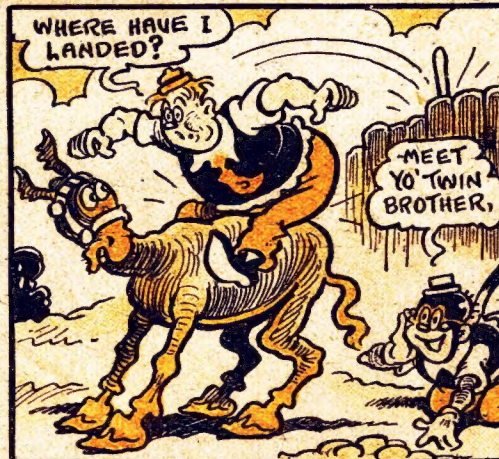
5. "Wow! I'll spificate that lazy coon!" howled Pinhead. "I'll teach him to poke me on the sniffer!" But trust the coon to come out on top.



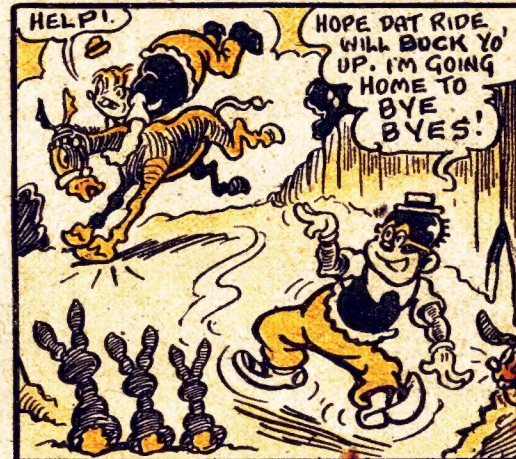
6. Yes, he kept well out of harm's way until the big boy suddenly spotted him and gave chase. Then he noticed a gap in the fence. "Good!" he gurgled.



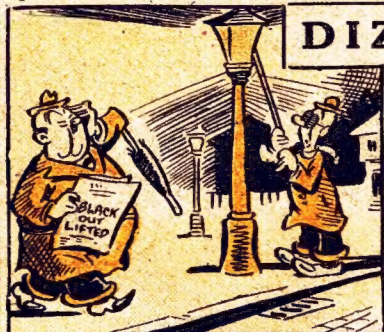
7. Two ticks later and Pete had slithered through into the next field. "I'll do a pole-jump over the top!" panted the big boy. "He can't escape me!"



8. But instead of dropping on the little coon as he planned, Pinhead landed on the back of a donkey. "Ha, ha! You fell for dat properly!" laughed Pete.



9. Before Pinhead had a chance to tell Pete where he got off, the donkey started to get his back up and the big boy knew he had not backed a winner this trip.



DIZZY